665 among the Party rank-and-file. He was recalled to Moscow to the agitation and propaganda section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. After his removal to Moscow he quickly forgot about the work in Belorussia. While director of the agitation and propaganda section in the Kremlin, Krinitskii at one conference sharply rebuked the president of Belorussia who was making a speech in Belorussian since he had not fully mastered Russian. Krinitskii reproved him, recommending that he speak in Russian.

After Krinitskii, in 1928, the First Secretary was the Latvian, Knorin. His activity left a definite mark, the more so since the Kremlin twice sent him to Belorussia as secretary. Knorin got acquainted with the leaders of the national movement and understood the strivings of the Belorussians for national rebirth, aided in the national work, and supported the initiative of the Belorussians. After he left, in 1928, Jan Gamarnik (1) an Austrian by nationality /19/

1. The Large Soviet Encyclopedia states that in his youth Gamarnik lived in Kiev. In Minsk he was considered a Czech. As we know, Gamarnik was subsequently shot together with Tukhachevskii. Cf. Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia, /Large Soviet Encyclopedia/ 1929 Edition, Vol. XIV, p. 456.

became First Secretary. Correct and tactful, a good orator and organizer, he did not introduce any changes in the national work. Gamarnik did not become intimate with anyone, especially in Belorussia. His activity did not last long--first appointed Director of the Political Administration of the Belorussian Military District he was then transferred to the post of Director of the Political Administration of the Red Army. In about 1928 or 1929 the Kremlin sent the Estonian, Gei, as secretary to Belorussia.

665 186 In a comparatively short period the national work in Belorussia had carved a broad path for itself. The rebirth of a national culture was an indisputable fact; cadres of youth had been trained and posted all throughout the state apparatus. The region was healing itself of the wounds inflicted by wars and occupations; it appeared that the Communism of the war years had gone, never to return. There was some thought of conquering new positions since the national work and all its measures had found unquestioning support among the broad masses of the Belorussian people... The Party leadership,

665 sent by the Politburo in the persons of the first secretaries, in the
186 majority of cases adopted a strictly formal attitude toward the national work. It is possible that only Knorin really understood the situation. Secretary Krinitskii learned Belorussian and occasionally made speeches in it, but even so it was only to produce a good impression on the Kremlin and in order to assist his Party career in this way, that he did it.

The First Victims

161 Up to 1930, there had only been one trial aimed directly at a nationalist. In 1926, Iu. Listopad, a non-Party teacher of Belorussian in the high schools, was arrested in Slutsk. He was tried in Minsk for organizing some sort of plot against the Soviet Authority. The trial was open to the public, and there were lawyers for both the presecution and defense. The students gave Listopad stormy ovations, and flowers were even brought to him during the trial. However the whole affair was cleverly and insidiously organized. The judges were members of the Belorussian intelligentsia and the Public Prosecutor, a well-known nationalist writer, D. Zhilunovich. /20/ It was all so well arranged that even Listopad's warmest supporters were forced to judge and condemn him. He was sentenced to five years in a reformatory--as the prisons were still called at that time. The shadows continued to thicken even after Listopad's trial had been forgotten. The twilight of the NEP was coming, and by the end of 1928 the cities were beginning to feel the shortage of agricultural products. In the Ukraine and other grain producing areas the Soviet regime was beginning to organize the first Machine and Tractor Stations (MTS), the forerunners of the collectivization which was soon to sweep over the peasantry.

In the beginning of 1931, Professor Vsevolod Ignatovskii, an academician and the leader of the Belorussian nationalists, fell a victim of the B. P. U. He had been called in for interrogation and afterwards shot himself in his own apartment. (1)

1. The suicide of Professor Ignatovskii was the last, as well as the most decisive act in the particular "case" of the S. V. B.* with which the G. P. U. had intended to connect him. The "case" was closed, and all those implicated were sent into exile in administrative functions--only the Communists Balitskii, Prishchepov, Al. Adamovich, and Il'iuchenos /sic/ were sent to concentration camps.

* Belorussian abbreviation, Cf. p. 6 meaning:Union for the liberation of Belorussia.

563 626 536 661 665 the Bund Party, and from this the conclusion was drawn that the Jewish chauvinists were idealizing a chauvinistic party and its members. This was enough to have the play immediately removed from the stage. It was also necessary to destroy the inscriptions on the monument (1). The Bolsheviks cannot bear the popularity of any

1. The monument to Girsh Lekert was placed on the site of the one to Alexander II in Minsk in 1922 (cf. Malaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia) /Little Soviet Encyclopedia/ Vol.IV, 1929 Edition, page 554, and also 1937 Edition, Vol. VI, page 139) and "liquidated" during the Ezhovshchina. Such was also the fate of one of the Minsk streets which in 1922 had been renamed Lekert Street and during the Ezhovshchina was re-renamed Voyoshilov Street.

other Party or its members, even though such popularity actually might be in accordance with historical reality. In this connection still another example is characteristic. The State Publishing House issued a series of biographies in the series called Zhizn' Zamechatel'nykh Liudei. /Lives of Outstanding People/. One of the books was about the life and activity of the famous volunteer Zheliabov. The book had been in circulation for quite a long time when criticism of it appeared in the Soviet press, as a result of which the book was withdrawn. The reason given was that the person of Zheliabov as a national worker was idealized -- this in spite of the fact that Lenin, even though not agreeing with the Narodnovolets tactics, called the movement a "heroic epoch". The real reason lies in the fact that Zheliabov admitted individual terror and advocated personal selflessness which are both very appealing to youth. /33/ The Bolshevik program repudiates individual terror, even though surreptitiously they practice it very widely. They are afraid to infect Soviet youth with the Narodnovolets' ideas about selflessness and thus turn it against themselves.

186 661 The Belorussians were always very proud of their great ancestor -- the scholar from Polotsk, a Doctor of Philosophy, and the first man in Belrussia to have a book published -- F. Skarina. In 1512, this great man received the degree of Doctor in medicine at the University of Padua. In one of the museum halls of the University there is even now a full-length portrait of Doctor Skarina among the other University celebrites. Until 1930 a lot of work and research

186 661 was being devoted to the life and work of Doctor Skarina. Portraits of him were printed in large quantities, and they decorated the halls of learned and cultural institutions, schools, museums, etc. There was a large plaster figure of him in the vestibule of the Institute of Belorussian Culture which in 1928 was transferred to the Academy of Sciences. After the proscription of National-Democracy the statue of the learned doctor of the sixteenth century was thrown out. Even the little statues of Skariny were destroyed, and a similar fate attended the portraits and statuettes of the other national hero, the leader of the Belorussian insurgents, K. Kalinovskii.

208 In order to compromise the National-Democrats and their activities completely the new director of Narkomprос[1] of the B. S. S. R., I. Gurskii, was ordered to have a play written with the appropriate content. Gurskii decided that he would write it himself and thus make his career. Not gifted with a dramaturgic abilities, he did not write a play but a worthless burlesque on people who had already seen the inside of G. P. U. cellars. Making use of his official position Gurskii compelled the First Theater to accept this talentless work for production. Enormous material resources were used in staging it, to the great detriment of the other theaters . . . However, neither material expenditures nor the director's efforts could help the play in the slightest. Gurskii portrayed the National-Democrats as drunkards and depraved elements. The attempt of the universally respected and talented poet, Ia. Kupala, to take his own life was depicted as the foolhardy escapade of a drunkard. After two or three performances, Gurskii's play, as obviously worthless, forced, and spurious, was withdrawn without any particular fuss, criticism, contrite admissions, or confessions of error on the part of the author . . . So the atempt to use the stage for persecuting the National-Democrats was for the present not crowned with success. From Soviet newspapers it has been ascertained that I. Gurskii recently "responded" with two plays on post-war kolkhoz life: Khleb /Bread / Svoi Liudi /One's Own People/. They met the same fate as his "response" of twenty-two years ago. /34/ They were panned by the critics and did not even get to the stage.

661 Simultaneously with the arrest of the National-Democrats all of their writings were withdrawn from libraries, reading rooms, and general circulation, independently of whether or not they had any connection with the charges brought against the prisoners.

1 [People's commissariat of Public Education - Analyst]

Evaluation of the Belorussian National Movement

186 So as to bring to a close our observations, which cover many years, we will try to provide an answer to the question whether the national movement in Belorussia was really a positive factor, whether it was of any genuine use to the Belorussian nation, and whether it justified the collossal number of bloody sacrifices which were offered up on the altar of nationalism. In our modest opinion the Belorussian national movement was unconditionally a positive factor in the history of the Belorussian nation, imparting a powerful impetus to the elevation of the national consciousness of the masses, to their cultural regeneration, and to the unprecedented development of national literary creativity, close to and understood by the national masses. As a result of the national advancement, which often lapsed into enthusiasm, the most talented and able figures came forward in all fields of the cultural and economic life of the region. Thanks to these self-sacrificing efforts a high level of research was maintained; there were unquestionable successes in the study of the historic past of the Belorussian nation; a firm foundation was laid for cognizance and study of the natural resources of the region and their eventual exploitation. Of invaluable service to the nation was the circumstance that the old generation of Belorussians was able to inculcate the young students who were their disciples with a love for the work of regenerating the Belorussian nation and to arouse their enthusiasm and unwavering faith in a happy future. The two generations united in a solid front and set to work to accomplish the tasks lying before them. It was fruitful and successful for the simple reason that the struggle did not involve the realization of some kind of abstract idea, as often as not difficult to understand and diffuse, nor was it directed against any particular class nor for any particular class but for the nation as a whole. The goal was clear and the road straight. The young generation was educated to follow the example of the Belorussian leaders, and the time will yet come when it will serve as the foundation for a further advance.

181 The national movement had still another positive aspect. It broke down the perverted concepts which the other peoples of Russia held about the Belorussians, their culture, way of life, manners, and customs; also it clarified the possibilities for an economic development in Belorussia. As far back as tsarist times there had been isolated

/81 certainty that they have been preserved here in the free world and sooner or later will come into the possession of the Belorussian nation. The time is at hand when the western world will become better acquainted with this remote and almost unknown country.

/82 The national movement in Soviet Belorussia exerted a positive influence outside its borders also, upon western Belorussia. The heroic activity and determination of Belorussian patriots strengthened the perseverence of the conscious part of the Belorussian population of Poland, preventing it from yielding to enforced colonization and helping it to preserve its national ties and to use every available means to oppose the advances of Polish chauvinists in their attempts to denationalize the Belorussians. In spite of the closing of all Belorussian national schools in western Belorussia, the intelligentsia studied and learned Belorussian literature, preserved its language, and remained devoted to the nation.

Leading figures of the Belorussian national movement were destroyed, together with their pupils and followers. The Belorussian nation suffered a fearful loss and was left without its standard-bearers; the youth was almost totally deprived of its preceptors; the national values which had been created at such effort and expense were crushed out of existence. The ideals of the Belorussian nation had to be hidden deep underground. But did everything perish?--No! Sprouts have been prepared for a stormy growth and development, and those who have gone before will remain as shining examples for an oppressed Belorussia. And the rebirth to come will be the most valuable remembrance and the richest monument to those Belorussians who gave up their lives for the good of the nation.

9: Amer. Russ. Inst. (no date) 1950 RCl Belorussia RCl
[Constitution as of July, 1947]

Chapter X. Arms, Flag, Capital

186 Art. 119. The arms of the Belorussian SSR are a sickle and hammer, against the rays of the rising sun, and surrounded by ears of rye, intertwined on the left with clover and on the right, with flax; below, between the two sheaves is a part of the globe. Both sheaves are intertwined with a red band inscribed with "Workers of All Countries, Unite!" in the Belorussian and Russian languages and, below, with the initials "BSSR". Above the arms is a five-pointed star.

Art. 120 . The state flag of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is a red cloth, with a gold sickle and hammer and a red, gold-bordered, five-pointed star above, and the gold letters "BSSR" above it in the upper corner, near the staff.

Art. 121. The Capital of the Belorussian SSR is the City of Minsk.

Chapter XI. Procedure for Amending the Constitution

642 Art. 122. The Constitution of the Belorussian SSR may be amended only by decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Belorussian SSR adopted by a majority not less than two-thirds of the votes of the Supreme Soviet.

Note: "Byelrcussia" is now the correct spelling in English as accepted by the Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of the United Nations.

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000 This English translation was made from a Russian text published by the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1947.

1 [Errata: should read "below" -- Analyst]

21: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1952 R1 Soviet Union R1
BeloRussia RC1

III. BYELORUSSIA

The development of Soviet Byelorussia is essentially a copy of the history of the Soviet Ukraine. In many respects it is a very poor copy. Byelorussia is considerably smaller than the Ukraine, it has no outstanding economic wealth such as the Ukraine has and the national consciousness of the Byelorussian people has crystallized far less than that of the Ukrainians. The Byelorussians, it is true, can boast of an illustrious past and can claim for themselves the Lithuanian State of the Middle Ages, whose most important documents were couched in the Byelorussian language. However, the Byelorussians did not produce a Hetman Mazeppa, a vigorous rebel whose memory could inspire the present generation. The modesty of the Byelorussian national movement is almost touching. Nothing could characterize its spirit better than the title of the first Byelorussian publishing company founded in 1906 – 'In our windows also shall the sun shine'.

Byelorussian nationalism in Czarist times was so weak that no Byelorussian succeeded in getting elected to the Duma. The landowners voted for Polish candidates, and the peasants, in their ignorance, for extreme Russian nationalists. The October Revolution found the Byelorussians still too inarticulate as a nation to be able to cope with the great tests of the revolutionary years. Without much external pressure Byelorussia, or rather, what might have become Byelorussia, fell to pieces. The few Byelorussian intellectuals had no clearly defined political aim and turned from one extreme to another, wavering between a Polish, Lithuanian and Russian orientation and thus aggravating the chaos in which the Byelorussian people found themselves. By the end of 1920 the Byelorussians were under five different Byelorussian governments and National Committees, and in addition, had a Minister for Byelorussian Affairs in the Lithuanian Government.

At last the Peace of Riga concluded between Poland and Soviet Russia in 1921 determined the division of Byelorussia: Western Byelorussia with about 2,000,000 Byelorussians went to Poland, while Central and Eastern Byelorussia became part of the Soviet Union.*

SOVIET POLICY IN EASTERN BYELORUSSIA

At first the Soviet régime found it rather difficult to decide which territories to allocate to the Byelorussian S.S.R. When the B.S.S.R. was formally constituted on January 16th, 1921, the Russian communists

* The estimate of 2,000,000 is halfway between Polish and Russian statistics. According to the official Polish census there were but 1,123,000 Byelorussians in 'Western Byelorussia'. Molotov mentioned the figure of 3,000,000 when proclaiming the incorporation of Western Byelorussia into the U.S.S.R. on October 31st, 1939.

inhabitants against 40·8 per cent Byelorussians and 7·3 per cent Great Russians. In Vitebsk, the second largest town, there were 45 per cent Jews, 30 per cent Byelorussians and 20 per cent Great Russians. Gomel, the third largest, had 40 per cent Jews, 29 per cent Great Russians and 22 per cent Byelorussians, and Mogilev 52·5 per cent Byelorussians and 39 per cent Jews.

The insignificance of Byelorussian industry and the absence of any Byelorussian town life worth mentioning explains to a great extent the difficulties which the Soviet régime experienced both on the political and on the cultural front in the Byelorussian S.S.R.

For a long time the communist leadership was unable to convince the more outstanding representatives of the Byelorussian people that class struggle had to be conducted in Byelorussia just as anywhere else in the Soviet Union. The leading Byelorussian intellectuals, who had close ties with the destitute peasant masses of their people, proclaimed the so-called *Bezburzhuaznost* (the non-existence of a bourgeoisie) of the Byelorussian nation. At the same time the Byelorussian nationalists or *Natsdemy* (National Democrats), as they were officially nicknamed, were profoundly pro-Western and anti-Russian in their outlook. They did not even like to be described as 'Byelorussians' or 'White Russians' since these terms simply degraded them, in their view, into a species of 'Russians'. They advocated in the twenties that the Byelorussians should be called *Krivichi*, thus identifying themselves with a Slav people inhabiting the territory of Byelorussia 1,000 years ago. The central Government opposed this suggestion. The Byelorussians had to keep the name which already externally associated them with the Great Russians. Nevertheless, the Byelorussian intelligentsia persisted in cultivating an ideology which maintained that no close relationship existed between the Byelorussians and Great Russians and that the former did not belong to the Eastern Slavs owing to their different origin, history and the character of their culture.[31] This Western orientation of the Byelorussian intelligentsia also had repercussions in the field of linguistics and led to the attempt to create a Byelorussian scientific terminology different from the Russian.

During the twenties, the communist régime did comparatively little against the nationalist tendencies in Byelorussia. In the absence of any communists capable of making a contribution to Byelorussian cultural life, the régime was forced during a certain time to leave the artistic and scientific activities of the nation in the hands of 'bourgeois nationalists'. Only towards the end of the twenties did the régime start purging the various cultural institutions of the country, and it was only in 1933 that the persecution of Byelorussian nationalism assumed major proportions. The year 1933 saw the discovery of the 'Byelorussian National Centre' which was charged with aiming at the establishment of a 'Byelorussian

661 Democratic Republic'. The 'Centre' was reported to receive its intruc-
186 tions from Vilna and to recruit its membership from among 'remnants of Kulaks, White Guards and counter-revolutionary nationalists'.

665 According to the then First Party Secretary of Byelorussia, Gikalo,
186 the party was forced to fight not only against an outside organization but also against nationalist agents in its own ranks. These nationalist agents, said Gikalo, had penetrated into the party in the early thirties and had apparently succeeded in occupying a large number of positions in the local government machinery. As in the Ukraine, the offensive against the nationalists inside the Communist Party was launched on the express orders of the leadership of the All-Union Communist Party.
[171] The All-Union Central Committee intervened in Minsk not only to secure the purity of communist principles in Byelorussia but also to protect in that republic the interests of Russian culture and the Russian language.

Moscow's intervention was precipitated by what became known as the 'Stsepuro Affaire'. A teacher with the name of Stsepuro had written a letter in Russian to a Byelorussian village council. Stsepuro's action led to a nationalistic outcry in which the local communist organizations and Soviet officials sided against the teacher, who in their view, ought to have written in Byelorussian. The matter was taken up by the Moscow newspaper *Pravda* and finally prompted the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party to draw attention to the 'distortion of Soviet nationalities policy' in Byelorussia. The statement of the Central Committee said that any ban against the Russian language and any persecution of persons using Russian were offences 'profitable only to the class enemy'. The Central Committee of the Byelorussian communists drew the necessary conclusions from the rebuke of the Moscow leaders and at a plenary meeting in December, 1933, proclaimed Byelorussian nationalism as the 'main danger'.[32]

Moscow had thus won the first round in the struggle against the local nationalist forces in Byelorussia. The second part of the fight reached its
[661] climax in the summer of 1937 when all prominent Byelorussian communists were charged with conducting a nationalist policy. They included Alexander Grigoryevich Chervyakov, President of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic who committed suicide, the Prime Minister, Nikolai Matveyevich Goloded and the First Party Secretary and arch-purger of 1933–34, Gikalo. Both Goloded and Gikalo were executed. The main charge directed against them was that 'they had tried to tear away the Byelorussian people from the socialist culture of the Great Russian people'. The men around Chervyakov, asserted an official publication, 'were determined to oust the Russian language from the schools, to do away with Russian revolutionary plays, with Russian belletristic literature and works of music. They thus made it difficult for

the Byelorussian people to acquire both the inexhaustible cultural treasures of the Russian people and the great cultural values created by the Socialist Revolution'. 665 186

At the same time, Stalin's opponents among the Byelorussian communists were accused of having been too liberal to the Polish minority in Byelorussia, a strange accusation from a party which professes to adhere to an internationalist ideology. The 'polonizing activities' of the Byelorussian 'Trotskyites, Bukharinites and national-fascists' consisted in having allowed a number of localities in Byelorussia to conduct their business in the Polish language and in having sanctioned the existence of a number of Polish schools.[33] 563

The purge of the Byelorussian communists terminated the policy of tolerance which the Byelorussian Government had shown towards its national minorities. This tolerance had been symbolically expressed in the coat of arms of the Byelorussian S.S.R., which contained the inscription 'Workers of the World Unite' in four languages: Byelorussian, Great Russian, Yiddish and Polish. The coat of arms in use since 1937 shows the same inscription in Byelorussian and Great Russian only. Together with the Polish inscription in Byelorussia's coat of arms the 'Polish National District' of the Byelorussian S.S.R. likewise disappeared. This district had served purposes similar to those of the 'Polish National District' of the Ukraine. It was called after Feliks Dzerzhinsky. [186]

KOLAS AND KUPALA – BYELORUSSIAN LEADERS

The history of the fight between the Kremlin and Byelorussian nationalism includes the interesting case of the two prominent poets and writers, Yanko Kupala (1882-1942) and Yakub Kolas, whom the Soviet régime drew over to the side of the 'proletarian revolution'. Both belonged to the petty bourgeois Byelorussian nationalist movement grouped around the weekly *Nasha Niva* (Our Cornfield) which long before the October Revolution was the first publication to advocate autonomy for the Byelorussian people. 186 538

Kupala was the son of an impoverished nobleman unable to pay for a higher education for his son. Kolas was of peasant origin. Kupala and Kolas had in common their violent hatred of the Polish landowners who owned over 6,000,000 acres of Byelorussian soil in 1914. As a symbolic challenge to the Poles they both threw off their Polish-sounding family names of Lutsevich and Mitskevich respectively and became known under their literary pseudonyms.

Kupala and Kolas found it difficult to overcome their 'bourgeois prejudices'. In their innermost feelings they remained nationalists however hard they tried to be 'good Soviet citizens'. In one of his poems

*[Cf. category 186, pp. 155-157--Analyst]

THE WESTERN BORDERLANDS

Be.
● 186 538 Kupala avowed his incapacity to become a real Bolshevik poet, thinking in terms of the whole Soviet Union and of all mankind:

'My Fatherland – it is the whole world,
I have torn myself away from my native soil!
Yet still I am not free from it – in sleep
I dream of Byelorussia!'

The role which Kolas and Kupala played in Soviet Byelorussia is unparalleled throughout the U.S.S.R. No Byelorussian Bolshevik ever assumed the role of a national leader of the Byelorussians – the leadership was in the hands of Kolas and Kupala. Instead of 'removing' the two poets, the Soviet régime tried to direct their poetic creation into the 'right channels' and to use them for communist propaganda. Kolas and Kupala were often criticized, at times they seem to have been in disgrace but they never disappeared, as did many excellent writers and poets of almost all the major peoples of the Soviet Union.

S.U. [661] The purge of Kolas and Kupala would have been tantamount to the bankruptcy of the Soviet cultural policy in the B.S.S.R., since the two were not only outstanding literary figures but actually cultural 'awakeners' of their people. Byelorussia could do without its 'national democrat' historians and folklorists, it could do without its leading communist politicians. Kolas and Kupala, however, were indispensable. Their case showed that there are limits even to purges in the Soviet Union. The purge in Byelorussia could not be carried so far as to endanger the cultural foundations of the third largest people of the Soviet Union. This is why Kolas and Kupala were spared despite all their 'sins' and 'deviations'.

The Soviet régime needed Kolas and Kupala not only as pillars of Byelorussian culture in the U.S.S.R., but also as the political heralds of Byelorussian irredentism which might evoke a response among the oppressed Byelorussian population of Poland. The two poets did indeed fulfil this task not as Bolsheviks but as nationalists and denounced most violently the partition of Byelorussia. Most typical in this respect was a poem by Kolas in which he cried out: 'Our homeland has been broken up by foreign robbers . . . Away with their frontiers! Down with their barriers! To us belong the fields and woods! Let us rise together with one mind and one will, happiness and freedom will not come to us of themselves! Long enough have we been hunted and driven from our homeland!'

'GREATER BYELORUSSIA'

Be. 131 728 In September 1939 came the triumph for people like Kolas and Kupala,[2] who by the force of circumstances had abandoned national democracy and embraced some sort of Byelorussian national communism–Byelo-

[1] [Cf. cat. 116, pp. 157-158 – Analyst]
[2] [Cf. Category 538, pp. 157-158 – Analyst]

563 but also, as in the case of the Ukraine, because of the transfer of Poles and Hitler's extermination of the Jews.

Another important task resulting from the annexation of Western Byelorussia still remains to be carried out by the Government of the B.S.S.R. A large proportion of the Western Byelorussians have little or no Byelorussian national consciousness, and they speak some sort of [197] local Slav dialect which they themselves do not identify as Byelorussian. This applies in particular to the population of Polesia where Polish statistics counted over 700,000 such 'local Slavs'. 'Greater Byelorussia' is now about to round off the formation of a Byelorussian nation by amalgamating the various brands of Byelorussians, not only formally in a purely administrative sense, but also politically and spiritually.

177.56 563 [195] This process, intended to effect the transformation of the Western Byelorussians into a full 'sovietized' people, has encountered considerable opposition, particularly among the Roman Catholics who had formed 20 per cent of the entire Byelorussian minority of the former North-Eastern Poland. The Roman Catholic Byelorussians had always most violently opposed the thesis of the 'brotherhood' between Byelorussians and Great Russians and their political organization under the Polish régime, the Christian Democratic Union, significantly called itself 'Byeloruthenian' instead of 'Byelorussian'.

● 186 Byelorussian opposition to the Soviet régime is dictated not only by economic and religious motives but also by national considerations. Although it has united Western and Eastern Byelorussia, the Soviet Government has offended Byelorussian nationalism by leaving the city of Vilna outside the Byelorussian 'State'. The Western Byelorussians looked upon Vilna as their national cultural centre and there may have been indeed a good case for including it in Byelorussia, but it was politically more expedient to make it the capital of Soviet Lithuania.

The difficulties which the Soviet régime had to face in post-war Byelorussia were not confined to the new western territories. The whole of Byelorussia had been occupied by the Germans for two to three years, and it was only natural that Soviet propaganda had to start in many respects right from the beginning when the Red Army re-entered Byelorussian territory. A statement by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party heralding the new propaganda campaign admitted indirectly that German Nazi propaganda had been successful among Byelorussians. The Communist Party organizations of Byelorussia were instructed in this statement to overcome 'the anti-collectivist and anti-state tendencies' with which the German occupants had indoctrinated the Byelorussian people.[35]

Many expressions of Byelorussian nationalism, however, existed quite independently of the moral consequences of German occupation. Judging by official Soviet admissions, Byelorussian nationalism, particularly

21: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1952 R1 Soviet Union R1
Belorussia RC1

SU Be 186

in literature and the writing of history, has, despite its youth, a very tenacious life, and its strong emphasis on Byelorussia's ties with the West is one of its principal elements.

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